Fact Sheet
December
2002

Perchlorate Identified in Simi Valley Groundwater

DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL

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DTSC is one of six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC's mission is to restore, protect and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.

State of California

California Environmental Protection Agency

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has identified the presence of the chemical perchlorate in Simi Valley groundwater. We are investigating to find out how much of this chemical is in the groundwater and where it came from. This fact sheet describes how the presence of perchlorate and our investigation may affect you.

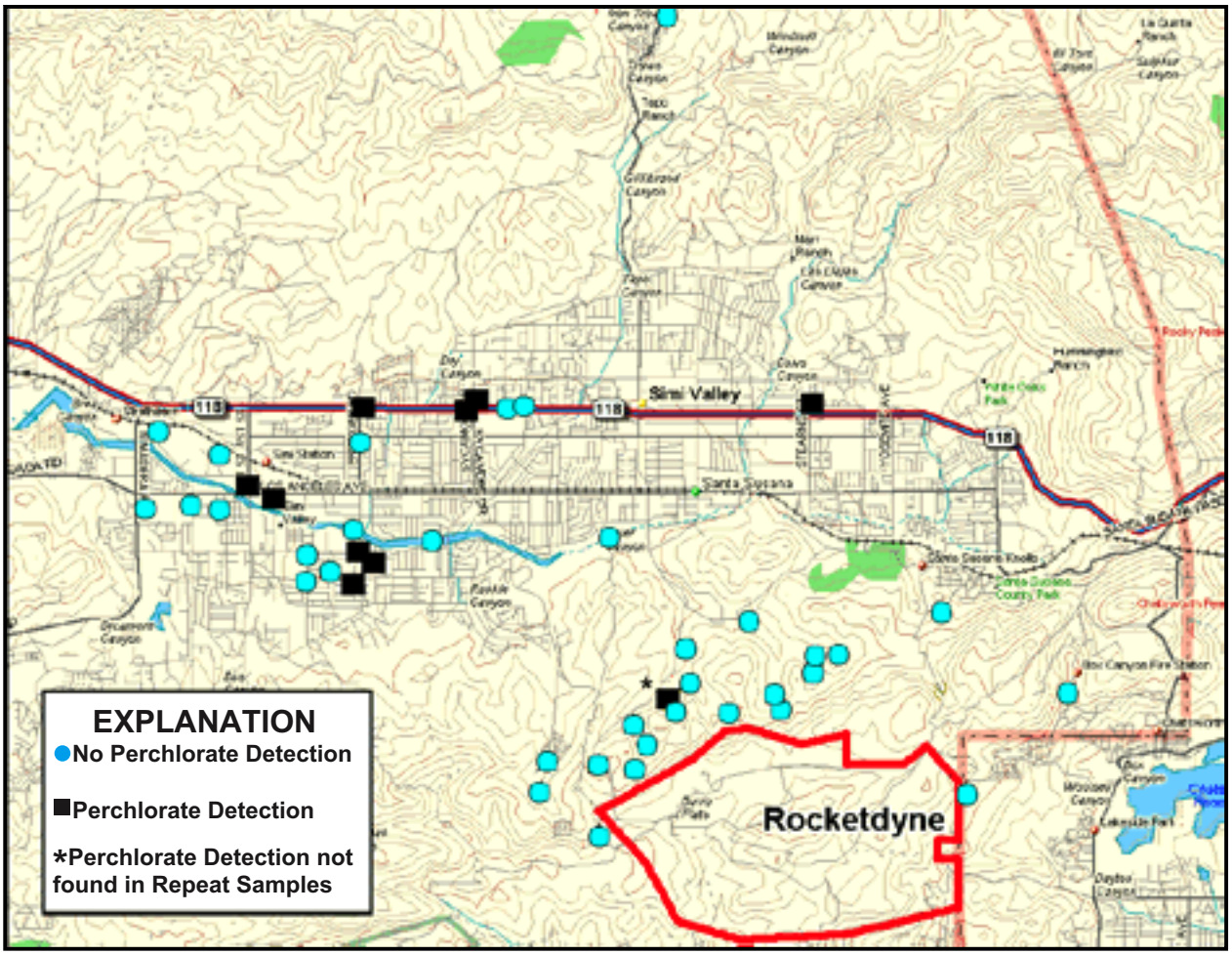
What is perchlorate?

Perchlorate is a white or colorless chemical powder that can dissolve easily in water. Many industries use perchlorate to make explosives and products such as solid rocket fuel (which is the main source of perchlorate contamination found in groundwater). Chemists create perchlorate for commercial and industrial use; it has also been reported to occur naturally. Perchlorate is soluble and mobile in water. Wastes from the manufacturing and improper disposal of perchlorate-containing chemicals are increasingly discovered in soil and groundwater.

How was perchlorate discovered in Simi Valley?

In 1999, the City of Simi Valley (City) began a project to reduce flooding caused by high groundwater. This project included installing 11 non-drinking water wells to remove water from underground in the areas that often flood. In testing the water, the City found trace amounts of perchlorate in one well. Soon after, the U.S. EPA re-sampled the same well and found similar results. The City and the U.S. EPA asked DTSC to review the data. Following this review, DTSC coordinated with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) and the City, and began an extensive program to sample soil, wells, springs and surface water drainages in key locations throughout the Simi Valley. (See map on page 2)

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov.



What have we found?

Perchlorate was detected in 18 of the 131 samples. These 18 samples contained perchlorate at levels between the Department of Health Services advisory level (4 micrograms per liter, or one drop in 3,500 gallons), and five times that amount (20 micrograms per liter). We have found the most perchlorate in shallow (generally less than 20 feet below the ground surface) groundwater near the valley floor. The sample with the highest level of perchlorate came from a well at a gas station on Patricia Street.

Where did the perchlorate come from?

Perchlorate may come from any property where it was used, produced, stored, transported or disposed. It has contaminated water in at least 20 states throughout the United States, and is found in many groundwater wells in northern and southern California, Lake Mead, and the Colorado River. Although no direct link has been drawn between the facility and these sample results, the nearest known perchlorate user is the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) located two to three miles south of the valley. We have found perchlorate in a few monitoring wells on SSFL property, but we have not found perchlorate between the facility and Simi Valley. Our investigation to identify the source(s) continues.

Is my health at risk?

Perchlorate has not been linked to cancer in humans, but high doses of perchlorate could affect a person's ability to process iodine in the thyroid gland. The most likely way you can be affected by perchlorate is if you drink water contaminated with perchlorate at elevated levels. DTSC is not aware of any private water supply wells in Simi Valley. If you get your water from a private well, please call Tim Chauvel, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (818) 551-2829 or e-mail him at tchauvel@dtsc.ca.gov.

Is my drinking water safe?

Yes, your drinking water is safe. Drinking water supplied to the City of Simi Valley does not contain perchlorate. Most of the water supplied to Simi Valley water customers comes from northern California. It is mixed with water from two wells in Simi Valley that are owned and operated by the Southern California Water Company.

Less than 20% of your water comes from these two wells. Water from these wells, as well as the water from northern California that it is mixed with, is tested and monitored for perchlorate and other regulated chemicals. The test results are reported to the California Department of Health Services.

What's next?

DTSC, the LARWQCB and the City of Simi Valley will continue efforts to identify the source(s) and monitor the level of perchlorate in groundwater. You will be updated on the progress of future work.

Learn more about perchlorate at the following web sites:

www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Santa_Susana

www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/chemicals/perchl/actionlevel.htm

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/pha/region_9.html#california

Contact Information

Agency	Responsibility	Contacts	Phones	E-mail	Web Sites
California Department of Health Services (DHS)	Sets and Enforces California's drinking water standards	Kurt Souza Water Quality Engineer	(Voice) (805) 566-1326 (Fax) (805) 745-8196	KSouza1@dhs.ca.gov	www.dhs.ca.gov
California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)	Oversees Environmental Corrective Action at Rocketdyne	Gerard Abrams Tim Chauvel Jeanne Garcia (media only)	(916) 255-3600 (818) 551-2829 (818) 551-2176	gabrams@dtsc.ca.gov tchauvel@dtsc.ca.gov jgarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov	www.dtsc.ca.gov
City of SimiValley	Public Works	Terrence Curson	(Voice) (805) 583-6804 (Fax) (805) 583-6300	tcurson@simivalley.org	www.simivalley.org
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board	Protection of Groundwater Resources	Melinda Becker	(213) 576-6681	www.swrcb.ca.gov	www.swrcb.ca.gov
Southern California Water Company	Supplies drinking water to residence of Simi Valley	John Brady Water Quality Engineer	1-800-999-4033	customerservice@aswater.com	www.aswater.com
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Santa Susana Field Laboratory Work Group Facilitator	John Beach	415-972-3347	Beach.John@epa.gov	www.epa.gov

Anuncio

Si prefiere hablar con alguien en español acerca de ésta información, favor de llamar a Eloy Florez, Departamento de Control de Substancias Tóxicas. El número de teléfono es (818) 551-2875.

Cut out and mail

ARE YOU ON DTSC's MAILING LIST?

If you would like to be on the mailing list, fill out the information below and mail back to:
Tim Chauvel, Public Participation, DTSC, 1011 North Grandview Avenue, Glendale, California 91201
Please print name and address clearly.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Comment: _____

_____

_____

❑ Please take me off the mailing list.

Note: While the SSFL mailing list is solely for DTSC use, the list is considered a public record.

Notice to Hearing Impaired

You can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at: 1-888-877-5378. Ask them to contact Tim Chauvel at (818) 551-2829 regarding perchlorate contamination in Simi Valley.

Tim Chauvel, Public Participation
California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Toxic Substances Control
1011 N. Grandview Avenue
Glendale, CA 91201-2205

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Important information regarding chemical contamination in Simi Valley
Información importante sobre la contaminacion Simi Valley